

REMARKS

Claims 9-13 and 15-30 are pending in this application. For purposes of expedition, claims 1-8 and 14 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 9-11, 13, 15, 17-19, 21, 23-25, 27 and 29-30 have been amended in several particulars for purposes of clarity and brevity in accordance with current Office policy, to place all claims in condition for allowance.

Claims 9-12 and 19-30 have been allowed without the necessity of amendments. As discussed, claims 9-11, 19, 21, 23-25, 27 and 29-30 have been amended for purposes of clarity to place in condition for allowance. Similarly, claims 14 and 17 have been conditionally allowed if rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of respective base claim 13. The Examiner's indication of allowability of these claims is noted with appreciation. For purposes of expedition, base claim 13 has been amended to incorporate all limitations of claim 14 in order to place in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 3 and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Tsuchi et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,818,406 for reasons stated on pages 2-3 of the Office Action (Paper No. 14). Similarly, dependent claims 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being anticipated by Tsuchi et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,818,406 for reasons stated on pages 5-6 of the Office Action (Paper No. 14). While Applicants disagree with the Examiner's assessment of Tsuchi '406, claims 1-8 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer in order to render these rejections moot.

Claims 1 and 13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being anticipated by Kubota et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,754,155 for reasons stated on pages

4-5 of the Office Action (Paper No. 14). Similarly, dependent claims 15, 16 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kubota et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,754,155 for reasons stated on pages 6-7 of the Office Action (Paper No. 14). As discussed, claim 1 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to render the rejection moot. Base claim 13 has been amended to incorporate all limitations of allowed claim 14 in order to render the rejection of base claim 13 as well as the rejection of dependent claims 15, 16 and 18 moot, and to place claim 13 and its dependent claims 15, 16 and 18 in condition for allowance.

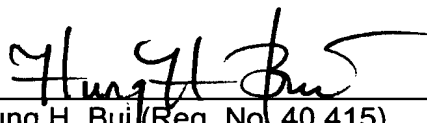
In view of the foregoing amendments, arguments and remarks, all claims are deemed to be allowable and this application is believed to be in condition to be passed to issue. Should any questions remain unresolved, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' attorney at the Washington DC area office at (703) 312-6600. Applicants respectfully reserve all rights to file subsequent related application(s) (including reissue applications) directed to any or all previously claimed limitations/features which have been amended or canceled, or to any or all limitations/features not yet claimed, i.e., Applicants have no intention or desire to dedicate or surrender any limitations/features of the disclosed invention to the public.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. Please charge any shortage of fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, No. 01-2135 (Application No. 501.36642X00), and please credit any excess fees to said deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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